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AN
ABRIDGMENT
OF THE
S P E E C H
OF
LORD MINTO, &c. &c.



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AN
ABRIDGMENT
OF THE
SPEECH
OF
LORD MINTO,
IN THE HOUSE OF PEERS,
APRIL 11, 1799,
ON A
MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY,
TO COMMUNICATE
THE RESOLUTIONS
OF
THE TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,
RESPECTING
AN UNION
BETWEEN
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

D U B L I N :

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1799.

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A B R I D G M E N T.
OF THE
S P E E C H, &c. .

AN attempt to offer to the Public a complete summary of Lord Minto's Speech, if not impracticable would, at least, be presumptuous; for that admirable work contains scarcely a paragraph, from which information is not to be obtained, essential to a knowledge of its important subject; or in which a sentiment is not to be found worthy of being recorded in letters of gold:—but, as there are in it, as well as in all other works of extraordinary merit and considerable length, some parts more impressive than others, and as I know there are multitudes of my Countrymen, who are anxious to form correct and impartial opinions on the Question of Union, but who have not leisure to consider it with the attention, which so complicated and comprehensive a subject requires, I will, for the ease and convenience of such men only (for on the

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prejudiced and interested argument would be thrown away) endeavour to select such parts as have made the strongest impression on my mind; indulging at the same time an anxious hope, that they may thence be induced to bestow on the subject a degree of reflection somewhat proportioned to its importance.—In order to be the more perspicuous, I shall write in the first, instead of the third person; sacrificing, where I judge it necessary, the Authors beauty of language to the conciseness which my plan requires.

In considering the Question of Union, the first proposition which seems to impress itself on every mind is, that a close and intimate Connexion, of one description or other, between Great Britain and Ireland, is essential not only to the prosperity but to the security of both Countries;—disconnection being likely to expose both, to the greatest possible quantity and variety of evil.—This, I find, to be conceded on all hands, except by those who call themselves United Irishmen, or by those other wretched men, whom the vigilance of Government has lately exposed to the scorn and contempt of a Country which they disgrace, under the title of United Englishmen;—both descriptions of persons, being confederates in the desperate and wicked projects of a foreign state, for the subjugation and ruin of their Country, I consider their opinions as entitled to the same degree of deference, that we should pay to the sentiments of the French Directory on a Question of British Interest;—but, we are engaged with them in a different sort of controversy from the Question of Union, and it is the *ultima ratio* alone that can settle the debate between us.



If even this proposition were not admitted, it is too obvious to require much argument to prove it:—a glance on the map of Europe, and a moment's reflection will satisfy us, that these two sister Islands, not merely contiguous, but lying apart from the rest of Europe, as it were in the very bosom and embraces of each other, and reciprocally dependent, for a secure and undisturbed Navigation in a great part of the circumference of both, are naturally and necessarily associated in the pursuits of Peace, and in the dangers of War; and that in a state of total political Separation, they must necessarily be rivals in every instance, and if rivals, enemies.

It is very easy to conceive the aggravated state of warfare that would be waged between two Countries, each possessing in a greater degree the means of offence, and in a less degree those of defence, than in any other possible situation; we should recollect too, that if one of these Countries should be engaged in a war with a third, the other would present advantages to the Enemy, which it could not otherwise possess; and thus, instead of contributing to each other's security and greatness, they would only harass, enfeeble, and endanger each other, in proportion to their respective means and resources. It is manifest, that the smaller and weaker Country of the two, must experience these disadvantages, yet more sensibly than its more powerful neighbour; and in its differences with the other, the aid and alliance of a third Power must be sought, and purchased by some consideration or other. We are taught by reason, then as well as by history, what sort of price must be paid by an inferior, for the proud and politic protection of a powerful

powerful state; as the comparatively feeble and poor cannot discharge such a debt in actual force and wealth, it must give what it has, and pay its quota in general subserviency; that is, in a base dependence, little short, either in degradation or ruin, of positive subjection. Indeed a small Country, situated between two great rival states, can hardly hope for an interval of tranquility, security, or dignity: dignity may be put out of the question; for such a Country must live from day to day by intrigue, a sort of degrading policy, irreconcilable with any sense of national honor or pride—and it can as little look for tranquility or security; for, besides its own quarrels, the causes of which would be infinitely multiplied by that vicinity which would otherwise extinguish them, it will be dragged perpetually into the quarrels of both its neighbours, and generally find itself the bone of contention between them.—It will, in fine, have to endure those scourges of desolation and ruin, which fall on all unhappy Countries that are the Theatres of War, without perhaps having any other interest in the contest, than that of being the prize destined to reward the conqueror, or purchase the peace of the vanquished.

We shall perceive, on the other hand, with the same facility the inducements and advantages of connexion: by this, the resources of one Country, instead of being subtracted from those of the other, flow into a general stock; out of which, as from the common heart, strength and prosperity may circulate to the remotest extremities of both, and the right arm of the Empire be nourished and fortified, without impoverishing or withering the left.—But, I will no longer insist on this
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conceded point, assuming it as a proposition, proved and granted, that connexion is necessary for the security and happiness of Great Britain and Ireland.—The Question then turns on the best and most eligible mode or form of that connexion.

On this point also I have a settled opinion, resolving itself into this proposition, that when two Countries, mutually require connexion, the only mode of connexion which can perfectly remove the evils of probable separation, and fully confer the benefit of Union, is a perfect identity and incorporation of their governments;—all relations of a more partial nature, perpetually subjecting Countries, so circumstanced, to vexatious contentions which inevitably terminate in a crisis, where the alternative only remains of total separation, producing mutual and perpetual hostility, or perfect incorporation and unity.

That such are the properties and defects of imperfect connexions, we shall satisfy ourselves by a cursory view of one or two principal relations of that description.—I shall begin with that produced by conquest, for I believe, it will generally be found, that where two Countries are so united as to invite, by their local positions a connexion between their Governments; the stronger of the two will attempt the subjection of the other, and if the attempt succeed, the mode of relation I now treat of, will be established.—Conquest, it is true, may lead to any form of connexion; but as War is rather a rough courtship, history furnishes but few examples of its terminating in that sort of happy Union which incorporated the Roman and Sabine People.—By conquest
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then I mean that dominion, which is exercised by the conqueror while the countries continue distinct, or that Sovereignty which, being founded by the sword, is measured by the power of enforcing it on the one hand, and the inability of resisting it on the other.—This sort of Connexion we may, I think, at once dismiss from the argument ; for, as a master nation is generally found to be a tyrant, and a subject nation a slave, and as the dominion held on this ground confers but a barren sceptre, and a crown of thorns, it may be considered as the worst of all.

I shall next speak of federal Connexion, and shall say a few more words upon it than I otherwise should, from having understood that, in the variety of opinions on the Question of Union, some have leaned towards a Connexion of that nature. I confess, however, I can find nothing in that mode of relation to recommend it, and every thing we know of such confederacies, seems to prove them, in the first place, inadequate to the purpose of Union, and in the next, of very precarious duration.—The fundamental vice of federal Constitutions seems to be that, professing only to provide for some common interest, they leave a distinctness and opposition of interests on many other points, and in speaking of national Interests, distinctness may be considered as merely a convertible term for opposition. It must be observed indeed, in reading the history of such Governments, that the different states generally act in a spirit of rival contention, and are so much occupied in jealousies and competitions with each other, that they often discover more apprehension of contributing a grain too much in the federal scale, than a grain too little for the

the success of their common object.—To this may be attributed the rapid downfall, almost without a struggle, of the United Provinces, and the degrading ruin and slavery into which they have been plunged:—the overthrow of another brave and celebrated People, the Swifs, may be accounted for on the same principle; and I cannot suppress some apprehension that we may have to lament, even in our own day, the dissolution of the Germanic Body itself, the greatest confederacy which the world ever knew.

I am now to speak of those Connexions, which have some part or member of their Governments the same, with distinctness and separate independence in all the rest. Such is that of one King or Executive Power, with separate Legislatures; and of this form of connexion, we have undoubtedly had experience enough in this Empire to prove its insufficiency.—But, I wish to say a few words on its principle, in order to inquire into the true cause of its natural tendency to weaken and diminish the bonds of its connexion, until they become at length little more than nominal, and remain perceptible only in the struggles and convulsions of its dissolution.

The first defect I shall notice, in this mode of imperfect connexion, is precisely that which is observable in federal Relations; the connexion being but partial, the great mass of interests continue distinct, and the public mind, being pointed towards a separate view of individual Interest, even the vicinity of the Nations connected, instead of improving friendship and harmony between them, generates a jealous, angry temper, ripening

pening every trivial discontent into grounds of alienation and hostility.

Another grand source of discord is, the inequality in the relative influence and power of the two Countries; and this no institutions can alter, for in such Unions the superior must ever be predominant, and the inferior subordinate in their common concerns;—hence follows a nominal independence only, in the inferior state, accompanied by a jealousy of the superior, which it must be confessed is not very surprising, and an irksome consciousness of real dependence, which I consider as the most fruitful of the evils which ultimately extinguish such Connexions.

In Governments thus administered under external influence, the eyes of the Nation pass over the immediate Instruments of its Administration, to that external Power which is, in fact, their efficient head;—and every grievance, real or imaginary, being supposed to spring from that source, discontent, chagrin, and resentment are perpetually directed against it—the clamor and struggles of Faction, the activity and eloquence of popular and ambitious Leaders, and sometimes, even the exertions of Patriotism have all the same direction: an angry, impatient, and intolerant desire for Independence, becoming the prevailing passion among the People, whoever touches that string reaches their hearts—perpetual attempts to improve their political situation follow, and incessant efforts, in periods of common distress and danger to extort concessions from the connected Country are the certain consequences.—These concessions being sought on the ground of right,

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are received without gratitude, until at length they serve rather to whet, than to satisfy the appetite that calls for them; and each victory of this kind, becoming only a vantage ground, from whence another may be fought, the improvement of Independence is pushed forward, until the true goal of that course comes in view, I mean separation. This view however, at length, discloses the danger or ruin connected with it; and both Countries, taking the alarm, seriously contemplate the only sanctuary, in which they can take shelter; perfect Union.

From this plain deduction of consequences from their obvious causes it is, I think, evident, that the effects I state are not merely fortuitous, but that they must uniformly be produced whenever the causes of them exist; and we are taught therefore, not less by reason than by experience, to expect (imperfect Connexion being the means of ascendancy, as well as the cause of subordination,) that the natural love of Independence on the one hand, and the incompatibility of that Independence with Connexion on the other, should always lead two Countries, circumstanced as I describe, to the last alternative, Union or Separation; an alternative, in which true Wisdom and Patriotism will make one choice; while Passion and Prejudice, or a blind sophisticated pride, counterfeiting Patriotism, will prompt another.

With this view of the subject, taken more from history and experience, than from the mere philosophical principle applicable to it, I cannot help looking to the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, not merely as desirable and advantageous, but as certain and unavoidable.

able:—indeed, it will be found, that every point or turn of the speculative course I have pursued is verified by the history of every Connexion we have hitherto known, with the Nations which now compose our Empire.—The Union of the Heptarchy was the birthday of nothing less than the Kingdom of England, the glorious Empire of which extends around the Globe; and it is an incontrovertible historical fact, that the local attachment and national feeling, which the inhabitants of the several kingdoms entertained towards their respective countries, were extended at once to the whole united Kingdom.

The imperfect political connexion which subsisted between England and Wales, previous to the reign of Henry the Eighth, was marked by calamities of the most afflicting nature to the latter; and the advantages, derived by that Country from its Union with England, may be judged of, by comparing or rather contrasting the period of its history, previous to that event from the reign of Edward the First, with the two Centuries of security, peace, and progressive improvement which it has since enjoyed.

Ruinous Contests between England and Scotland, for nearly three Centuries, deluged both Countries in blood, and terminated in the Union of the two Crowns, at the accession of James the First; but, here commenced a Century of that precise relation which is the subject of our present enquiry.

The two Kingdoms had one Prince and one Executive Power, with separate Parliaments. — Scotland asserted

fested a perfect independence and equality, but experienced a real subordination. — It would undoubtedly be unfair to impute to this cause alone, the many disadvantages under which she laboured, and the declining condition of that Country during this last period. — Much of the calamity which she experienced, may be placed to the account of the Troubles and civil Wars, of which every part of the Island partook, during a considerable part of the last Century : — but, with this allowance, it is not the less true, that the last Century was a period of great political discord and dissension between England and Scotland, in which the latter Country manifested that angry and querulous temper, which I have described as inseparable from the jarring and abhorrent Union of nominal Independence, and real Subordination. — This Cause produced its natural effect, and both disturbed the Empire in Peace, and weakened it in War; sometimes, by political contention between the people of Scotland and the Monarch : — sometimes by the habitual animosity of the two countries, hardly kept under by the authority and mediation of the common Sovereign : — sometimes, by the Intrigues of Scotland with France; and, above all, by the pursuit of the Idol, Independence, to the very brink of Separation. — The very Unity of the Crowns became a grievance; and towards the close of this period, (I mean in the first Years of the reign of Queen Anne) partly by projects for abridging the Prerogative, because it was administered out of Scotland; partly by projects for usurping a considerable portion of the regal power, in order that it might be administered within Scotland, partly, in fine, by refusing to accede to the Settlement of the Succession, adopted

in England, the Parliament and the Patriots of Scotland, brought the danger of impending separation so home to the sense and bosoms of both Countries, that the prudence of the people was at length alarmed; they opened their arms to each other, and took shelter from ruin, in that inseparable embrace which has ever since continued, and I trust, ever will continue to unite them.

The Connexion between England and Ireland began in Conquest, and the relation was that of Sovereign and Subject.—I do not say a Sovereign, able at all times to enforce his dominion, or a Subject submissively acknowledging it:—but, whatever the Connexion was, it had that origin, and preserved that character through its first period.—This first and intolerable stage of national relation, passed forward and softened gradually, but through the sanguinary process of habitual resistance and insubordination, swelling occasionally into civil Wars and Rebellions of the most ferocious character, into a dependent Connexion, or a mitigated, but avowed dependence of Ireland on England.—This second period also passed away, and the state of Irish Independence, now subsisting, was achieved by the exertion of Irish Energy, in moments of British debility and distress.—In the mean time, we have arrived at that precise point of Connexion which has been the principal object of discussion.—We have a common Prince with separate Parliaments.—Ireland claims a sovereign, independent Government; and that claim is freely admitted, while England exercises nevertheless, with the acquiescence of Ireland, an open ascendancy and controul in every one of its concerns.

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—We are making, at this moment therefore, an experiment which is not yet twenty years old, and the present crisis of difficulty and danger, furnishes the proper ordeal for determining its efficacy. — Surely then, I may claim the benefit of facts, of which we are ourselves the living witnesses, and appeal at once to the disastrous testimony of the present period, for the efficacy of such a system, in yielding to the Empire protection, and support, and in averting from both Countries the danger of common ruin. — Can we need better proof than every tide has lately brought us that the present feeble and flimsy bond which connects Great Britain with Ireland does not possess one principle of stability ?

After having heard his Majesty's lawful exercise of the power with which the Constitution of Ireland has invested him and the legitimate means employed by the Sovereign of that Country to preserve a uniformity of Measures in the direction of our common Interests treated as the interference of a foreign Power, we have had the misfortune of seeing a great proportion of the Irish People, considerable for its numbers, and I fear, not altogether contemptible even for its Blood and Talents, in open Rebellion against our common Sovereign, and in close alliance with our common Enemy. — The dissolution of all Connexion between us was the object they proposed. — The grievance which they rose to redress was that Connexion, and the cause which their Manifestos proclaimed as well as the standard under which they mustered and fought was separation. — This end then, towards which we have seen such Connexions are continually prone — this very separation, which

which is the natural inborn propensity of imperfect relation, has already been the subject of a civil War. — I have glanced in this manner on the history of British and Irish Connexion, only to shew that a tendency to total extinction is proved to be one of its properties; and I am hardly apprehensive of a dissenting voice to the conclusion which appears to me to result from this deduction, whether of history or reason, that we have reached the point, at which the evils of imperfect Connexion are at that height, beyond which lies only the alternative I have already mentioned, of Separation or Union. — We stand, in short, precisely in that predicament, in which the prudence of both Countries, and the fidelity and honor of those who are entrusted with their Interests, are called upon by the most solemn and instant appeal, to snatch them from that precipice, on the very edge of which they both stand.

Having hitherto treated the Question somewhat speculatively, I would now speak more particularly to the practical inducements which should recommend this measure, and the consequences of relinquishing its adoption. — First to England.

It would produce an accession of real and efficient Force to Great Britain, as a naval and military Power; for, were all causes of difference between the Countries extinguished, and were the affections of the whole of Ireland, as seriously directed towards the general service of the Empire, and its Force as disposable for that purpose, as may be said of every part of Great Britain, it cannot be doubted, that the power and resources of
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the Empire at large, would receive thereby an essential augmentation and improvement.

It would exempt England, in moments of war and difficulty, from those embarrassments which have never failed to distract and annoy her, as often, at least of late years, as war and difficulty have occurred, and which render Ireland, instead of a resource, only a dead weight hung round the neck of British Exertion, at this time when the full energy of both might be well employed against the common Enemy.—The case is such, that we have not only to contend with this difficulty in our Contest with France, but it must be an improvident and sanguine view of our own affairs, and of the general events in Europe, to consider even the preservation of Ireland, to the paternal government of his Majesty, and the continuance of any connexion between us, as a matter that is not become, in some degree, problematical and precarious.—We cannot rely on the constancy of fortune in war;—nor on the steadiness and uniformity of any national sentiment.—Who would suppose it possible, that religious differences, between two sects of Christians, should have been assigned as one of the principal Causes of the late Rebellion, while the remedy proposed to redress that grievance, would eradicate altogether, and subject to a fanatic persecution, the profession of Christianity itself?—Indeed, I have never heard any distinct grievance articulated as a Cause of that absurd Rebellion, that would not be enhanced a thousand fold, by the most perfect success that could have been proposed in the object of it.—I do not however say, Ireland must be lost if we have no Union:—on the contrary, my Confidence is too
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great in the skill and valour of the British Navy;—in the courage and discipline of the British Troops; and in the honour and fidelity of that part of the Irish Nation, which professes attachment to the British Empire, to admit of my desponding on that ground; but, I cannot say less than this, that we have no security for the preservation of Ireland, if we do not draw the bonds of our connexion much closer, and that without delay.

Let us then contemplate a little, the consequences of our total separation from Ireland, and of the necessary attendant, at least in the present moment, on such a rupture,—I mean, her immediate Alliance with the French Republic.—I shall pass rapidly over these consequences, because they are too obvious, and their importance too sensible, to require, or perhaps admit of amplification.

An Irish, Democratic Republic, or rather Anarchy, must be the first and instant consequence of our separation.—Let any man then, attached to the British Constitution;—let any one, who is fond of order and security in Society, or even afraid of the extremes of disorder;—let any one, who would shrink from universal plunder, confiscation, and murder, with all the nameless miseries, wretchedness, and guilt which are but the particulars of that aggregate, called Anarchy; let any man, I say, who has the slightest concern for the human race and its happiness, a spark of love for his country, or even a common and vulgar solicitude for his own and his children's security, reflect for a moment on the triumphant establishment of a democratic anarchy in Ireland.

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It is not enough to say "Proximus ardet;"—it is part of our own Tenement that is in flames, and we come in absolute contact with this pestilent Contagion.

Let us consider what would be the situation of the western coast of Great Britain, from the Land's End to the Hebrides;—let us ask those, whose Houses now stand on the margin of the Irish Channel; whose Lawns and Gardens are washed by the Sea, which now separates them only from Friends; let us ask those great manufacturing Coasts, Counties, and trading Cities, which now draw profit and wealth, without danger, from that channel, what their condition, and that of their Country will be, when they stand within hail of a powerful and savage Enemy, which the darkness of a single night can bring to their chamber doors?—At present, the British Commerce and the British Navy pass freely through this Channel, with friendly Ports and Coast on either side, as if it were an inland Navigation; while the ships of the Enemy, cannot either for War or Trade, approach this maritime Pass.—What new exertion of vigilance will be required, what additional number of Ships, and of Seamen must be retained from offensive War, and must abandon the Ocean to protect the Coast of Great Britain, against those of Ireland, and to watch the Ports of the latter Country in its whole circumference?

These are some, it would be difficult to enumerate all, the consequences of Irish separation from Great Britain, and connexion with France, as it would affect England.—I am far from saying, I will never admit,

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that even these accumulated difficulties would prove too many for the, hitherto unmatched, powers of British energy or wisdom;—but, I say the change would be great, the danger as yet untried, and the issue more doubtful, than our prudence as Englishmen, and our duty to our Country should permit us to expose it to, if the trial can be averted by any honorable means.

This Consideration perhaps, might in strictness, be thought sufficient for the attention of the British Parliament, since the Irish Parliament is, no doubt, competent to deliberate, and decide on all that regards the Interests of Ireland in this Question.—No man is less disposed than I am, to controvert the concurrent competence of the Irish Parliament, to deliberate on its exclusive competence, to decide the Question as it regards Ireland.—I must nevertheless think the Interest of Ireland, in this measure, a very material point in the deliberation of the British Parliament also.—For although an entire Union with that Country seems to be desirable, on a separate View of British Interest, yet it would, in my opinion, cease to be so, if it were not advantageous to Ireland also.—The benefit must be mutual, in this mutual transaction, in order to be enjoyed by either.—The evils attending separation would not be removed, but on the contrary would, in my judgment, be much enhanced, by any measure which should unite us at the expence, or to the essential prejudice of either.—If sincere and cordial harmony is not the fruit of Union;—if identity of Constitution is not founded on identity of Interest, and is not followed by identity of sentiment and feeling towards

towards the united Empire, such an Union will not cure the evils of imperfect relation, or even separation; but may bring some of them, nearer and more home to both.—I claim it therefore, as an English Question, to enquire whether Union with Great Britain will be beneficial to Ireland?

I am to consider then, the consequences which would result to Ireland, from that situation of which I have already described some of the consequences to England; I mean a total separation from Great Britain, and alliance with the French Republic.—I have already assumed as the first fruit of this event, or probably as either preceding or accompanying it, the abolition, in all its parts, of the present Constitution of Ireland, the zealous attachment to which is opposed to all the advantages of Union, and the establishment on its ruins, of an Irish Republic on the French Model.—This change and all the complicated calamity it bears *in gremio*, I consider as more fatal than all the rest to the happiness of Ireland; but I will rather postpone its consideration for a moment, and advert to the other less important, indeed, but yet serious effects of such a Revolution. It implies then, in the first place, a state of open hostility to England; and this warfare must, in all probability, partake of the nature of civil war.—For it cannot be imagined, that Ireland should be unanimous in surrendering a free Government and embracing French chains; nor in preferring that abhorred compound of guilt and madness, of infamy and ruin, to the blessings of religion, law, honor, security and genuine freedom; nor is it imaginable that Ireland will be unanimous in rejecting British Connexion for the purpose of

fraternizing with France.—The event which I have supposed, I have supposed to be the issue of war, in which one Party in Ireland, now the strongest, and I trust the most numerous, has been subdued.—But submission to force does not change the mind; and were such a calamity to befall Ireland, the new Irish Directory will find that the Armies of England, when employed in the rescue of Ireland from that slavery, will be seconded by a great and powerful portion of their Subjects. Ireland then is doomed in this event, to foreign and internal war, with all its complicated miseries, of which the bitterness is indeed, yet on the palate of that unhappy Country.—I have already spoken of the disadvantages to which even England would be subjected from the hostility of Ireland.—It is manifest that the Country which is the least powerful on shore, and is null at sea, must labour under the same disadvantages multiplied in an infinite degree.—A French Army in Ireland is the natural consequence of this state of things: if that Army is weak, it cannot protect them; if it is strong and adequate to the objects of France in sending it, as assuredly it will be, Ireland becomes a miserable province of France.—But Ireland as a separate state, must alone provide for all the imperial Establishments to which she now contributes but a part.—Ireland must have an Army all her own, and she will find she must subsidize her allied Army, not by Treaty only, but by Requisition and Contribution, and every other form of exaction and extortion, limited by the modesty of the French Directors, their Generals, and all their subordinate Officers of plunder.—They must have fortified Towns, and all the Establishments of that costly branch of defence.—They must have a Navy, build Ships, maintain Arsenals and Dock-Yards,

Yards, supply their Navy with Stores and Provisions, and must man and pay their Fleets, all from their own funds and resources.—Have the Economists of Ireland computed the price of these imperial honors, if indeed they can be borne at all?—But let them consider, whether the insulated trade and wealth of Ireland will furnish either men or money for such demands, even after the people shall have so far belied all the experience which the world has had of them, by submitting with perfect obedience to the utmost exactions that can be laid upon them.—It would after all be worthy of a moment's reflection, whether if Ireland should not suddenly accomplish that which France, Spain, and Holland, seconded by an armed neutrality of the maritime Powers of the North; that is to say, what the whole naval world have tried in vain, I mean should not suddenly acquire a superiority, at sea over Great Britain, whether her commerce and every hope which her insular situation could suggest or realise, must not be held by sufferance, and at the mercy of that powerful and offended neighbour, to whom nature had allied her, but whose generous offer of an equal and honorable participation in power, prosperity and happiness, she had rejected with insult, as if it had been an injury.—Ireland will, no doubt, not expect after her separation from England, and alliance with our Enemies, to partake freely in our East India or our colonial Trade; nor will she expect of England in those circumstances the great and liberal sacrifices which she now makes to the support and promotion of Irish Industry; sacrifices which, however liberal in their extent, and however beneficial to Ireland in their effect, I consider only as a natural indulgence of fraternal affection,

as well as a wise exertion of imperial policy, while we are united; but which must of necessity expire with our connexion.—Will the trade of France, or the share of it to which they would be admitted, and the conditions of its tenure, compensate this loss?—Will restraints and prohibitions on the commercial intercourse between England and Ireland be no loss to the latter Country?

The considerations which I have already enumerated are of no light or trivial import; but I must now set before the eyes of Irish Gentlemen, one inseparable consequence of such a revolution, and one of which they are no doubt aware, I mean the expulsion and confiscation, not to say the blood of those who now support their ancient Connexion with England; and whom the case I have stated supposes to have been defeated. But will confiscation and murder go no deeper even than this? In the savage triumph of democratical anarchy, will not every friend to the established Constitution of Ireland, to the authority of Law, or even to the moral restraints of Virtue and Religion, will not every one who is guilty of that unpardonable, irremissible crime, the possession of property, real or personal, great or small, will not, in a word, all those whose situation seems to offer either a lure, or a curb to violence, be involved in that undistinguishing massacre and pillage, which sweeps the way before and bears up the train of such Revolutions? I must indeed put it, seriously and earnestly, not as a topic of declamation, or false and artificial feeling, but as furnishing the soundest argument, and exciting the warmest solicitude, to the property, and I may say to the industry, and to the
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virtue of Ireland, without distinction of degree, or of religious persuasion, what would be the consequence of a complete victory obtained by France in Ireland, what would be the inevitable consequence of delivering Ireland, with all her political, religious and civil Interests, over to the discretion of that description of Irishmen who would then become their masters, and of that description of anarchy which must follow such events as I have described — I choose rather to hint at than to dwell on such topics.—They are indeed fitter for the private meditation of those who are concerned in them, than for public discussion or rhetorical amplification.—I am content with having stated shortly and dispassionately the nature and degree of some of those dangers which may induce England to consent to Union, but which seem to command Ireland, with the authority of urgent and instant necessity, to seek without delay, the refuge which this measure presents to her.

It is impossible to overlook some circumstances in the internal and political condition of Ireland, which bear as powerfully on the Question of Union, and seem to recommend that measure to the people of Ireland, as strongly for the purposes of equal Government, and of civil and municipal happiness, as on any other grounds whatever. Ireland is a divided Country, but unequally divided as to property and numbers; the least numerous class possessing the property and the power; but the most numerous entertaining, and indeed cherishing fondly, and tenaciously, claims on both, I mean both on the property and the power.—I need not describe the extent or the violence of those passions which inflame and exasperate both parts of the Irish Nation
against

against each other. — Every one knows the firm and immoveable basis on which their mutual hatred stands; the irreconcilable nature of its motives, its bitter, malignant, and implacable character. — In this frame and temper of mind, however, towards each other, one of those portions of Ireland claims and exercises what is felt by both, to be a species of dominion over the other. I believe it is hardly too much to say, that there are two Nations in Ireland; two Irish Peoples; the one sovereign, the other subject. — The sovereign class, or cast of Irishmen, claim their Sovereignty as of right, and ground it on an old title of conquest, confirmed, as they contend, by possession, acquiescence, and prescription. — They claim also the federal support of Great Britain in maintaining this dominion, on the solemn grounds of fidelity to implied compact, compensation for sacrifices, and reward for services. They shew a close alliance and identity of views between themselves and the English interest in Ireland in all times, and they rely as strongly on recent, and even on present exertions in a common cause as on the uniform tenor of their ancient services. — In a word, they call at once upon our honor and our gratitude, and they support that appeal by a stream and series of facts which we cannot controvert. — I must confess, that I have always felt this point as constituting a true and proper dilemma — on the one hand, I cannot admit the ascendancy of one part of a nation over another part of the same nation, to the extent and to the purpose claimed in Ireland as capable of assuming any character deserving the denomination of right. — That which is a wrong on one side, cannot, intelligibly to me, become a right on the other. — Wrong is not a material out of which it appears possible to construct right; and I do not think the virtues of

of possession, prescription, or any other limitation of time, which are supposed to cure the vices of a bad title, at all applicable to the case of perpetually subsisting, and, as it were, renovating wrongs, especially such as affect the political rights of great numbers of men.—The operation of prescription in confirming titles, even in the private transactions of property, is, indeed, different, I believe, from the common notion that is formed of it.—Prescription does not cure the original vice of a bad title; but, after all memory of the good title, which had been supplanted by the usurped one, has been lost and buried under the oblivion of time, prescription, that is to say, the lapse of time within which legal memory can survive, determines the expiration of the old title and gives effect, not to the bad one which first superseded it, but to a new title arising out of possession, and consummated in this manner by the completion of prescriptive time.—Nothing of this applies to subsisting and continuing wrongs, in which the length of their duration, and the frequency of their repetition, instead of diminishing the injury, must be felt to be a grievous aggravation, and instead of converting wrong into right, seems only to improve and fortify the title of those who suffer, to shake off the injury on the first opportunity that offers. — If possession then will not constitute this singular right, which is claimed in wrong, as between the parties themselves, neither can it be improved by the interests, the engagements, or the obligation of a third party: and I do not see how the *jus tertii*, as it may be called, of England, can affect the relative claims of these two Irish Nations, or of these two parts of the Irish Nation. — On this ground, therefore, and merely on this general and abstract view of the question, I con-

fefs I might have thought it difficult to affign a fufficient reason to preclude his Majesty as Sovereign of Ireland, from concurring with his Irish Parliament, or even from exerting, in every lawful way, his legitimate powers in promoting fuch meafures as might be calculated to place every clafs of his Irish Subjects on an equal footing, as to civil rights, and consolidate thefe two hostile Nations into one peaceable and united family. — But in truth nothing can be lefs rational, nor more dangerous, and often fatal than thefe abftract views of practical queftions, affecting the interefts of multitudes and of nations. — In the blind purfuit of abftract right, we fhall often find ourfelves, innocently no doubt, if our intention be confidered, but yet too effectually, the inftruments of great practical injufice and oppreffion. I believe there are few cafes to which this obfervation applies more clofely, than to that which we are confidering. That part of Ireland which we would wifh to redrefs, claim not only political equality in the Government of this Country, a claim, in which I confeff, I cannot help fympathifing with them; but they are known to entertain, and to nourifh yet more fondly and anxiously, though perhaps not yet fo loudly and diftinctly pronounced, claims of a very different nature. — We cannot be ignorant that the firft application of thofe rights with which we fhould be difpofed to inveft them, is likely to be the perpetration of a great wrong, and that at bottom, that wrong was, perhaps, the true and eventual object of their actual demand, and would be the practical refult of its attainment. The Catholics of Ireland not only claim a participation in the civil franchifes enjoyed by their Proteftant Countrymen; but they fofter claims on the *property* of Proteftants, the pre-
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sent possession of which they treat as mere usurpation, and these claims are of no trifling extent.—We know the aspiring character of their church, or if you please, of all Churches, or of all Bodies and descriptions of men.—We must, above all, recollect what is perhaps more urgent than all the rest, that the Catholics, beside their claims, civil or religious, have passions to gratify, passions long irritated, long restrained, but not on that account the less vehement, or dangerous.—I have heard such apprehensions treated lightly, as the productions either of imagination or ignorance; and I certainly pretend to no credit on such points, from personal knowledge or inquiry. I should wish therefore to qualify any thing that may appear rash or peremptory, in what I hazard on such a subject, by avowing that degree of diffidence in my own views, which may be thought becoming with regard to facts, which though attested, I think, satisfactorily by others, have not fallen under my own observation.—But with this qualification, I confess that I find it difficult to resist a conclusion to which the general knowledge we may all possess of the human character, applied to such facts as all admit, seems to lead us.—I must therefore profess a strong impression, that if to the physical force already possessed by the Catholic Body, and which consists in superiority of numbers, were added, by any such revolution as that which we are considering, the advantages of political power, and the weight and influence which belong to the authority of Government and Legislation, some danger might accrue to the property, the establishment, and even the personal security of the Protestant in Ireland; and with this apprehension on our own minds, the alarm expressed by those who are so deeply inter-

ected in the consequences of such measures, seems entitled to our serious and earnest attention,

I am not more clear, therefore, in thinking the Catholics entitled to a fair participation in the civil and political franchises of Irishmen, than I am in feeling, that the Protestants ought to be protected and defended in the security of their property, their religion, and their persons, against every violence which the Catholics might be disposed to attempt, when they have passed from their present state of subjection to that of authority and power.—The dilemma, therefore, has hitherto consisted in this.—The Protestants could not be supported in that ascendancy which seems necessary even for their protection, without derogating from what may appear to be a natural right of the Catholics.—The Catholics could not be supported in their claim of Equality, without transferring to them that ascendancy which Equality of Rights must draw to the larger body, and which from that moment must expose the Protestants to dangers from which they ought to be protected.—Such seem to be the practical difficulties in the way of abstract justice, while the Government of Ireland continues merely local.—An Irish Parliament, in which the ascendancy is either Protestant or Catholic, and it cannot chuse, but lie on one side or the other, may be expected still, I fear, to gore and lacerate their Country, by one or other of the horns of this dilemma; and I see no perfect remedy for Irish division, and its lamentable consequences, while these two enraged and implacable opponents are still shut up together, and enclosed within the very theatre, on the very arena of their ancient and furious contention.—

tion.—I do sincerely think, that this divided and double condition of the Irish People requires something of an *imperial aula*, a legislature founded on a broader and more liberal basis, to administer impartial laws to all, and to reconcile security with justice.—While one of these Parties must judge the other, in which ever hand the scales may be placed, I fear there is reason to expect only violence in the suit, and if not injustice, at least, slow and imperfect justice in the decree.—My mind, I confess, cannot resist the conviction arising out of all these considerations, that the United Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, will in the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, constitute a better legislature, and a more perfect, because a more impartial Parliament, for all Ireland, than any representation of a minor part or section of Ireland, in a separate, local Parliament ever can.—I am persuaded, that laws beneficial to the mass of the People of Ireland, and promoting its general prosperity and happiness, may be expected with greater confidence from the United Parliament, in which local partialities, interests, and passions, will not divert the straight and equal current of legislation, than in an Irish Parliament, where these stumbling blocks must for ever bend or impede its course.—In the United Parliament right may be done unaccompanied by wrong.—Irish Catholics may be invested with their political capacities, without the slightest danger to Protestant establishment or property.—These, on the contrary, must acquire a tenfold and hundredfold security in the Protestant Parliament, and the genuine Protestant ascendancy of the United Kingdom.—The Protestant Church and Property may, on the other hand, be secured,

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without perpetuating the present humiliating and degrading exclusion of the Catholic part of the Irish Nation. Such are some of the particularities in the condition of Ireland, which appear to me to add in her case, many powerful inducements to those, which in every other instance may invite neighbouring and friendly Countries to a close and intimate Union of their Governments.

I confess, that to me these considerations furnish by no means the weakest recommendation of this measure.—I look with peculiar satisfaction towards the prospect which it seems to open, I think in truth, for the first time in the history of Ireland, of doing justice to one part of that nation without injury to the other, and of providing for the general prosperity and happiness, without bringing calamity on any particular part.—For I cannot consider the admission of Fellow Citizens to a participation of common franchises, as an injury to those who happen already to possess them;—nor the loss or even destitution of partial and exclusive dominion over fellow subjects, as any wrong.—The Protestants have a sacred right to their properties, to their religion, and to their own liberties; but the liberties of their Catholic brethren are no part of that property; they have no narrow corporate right, or none that I can wish to support them in, in the Government of their Countrymen; nor can I see that the subjection of the Catholics must be an article in the charter of Protestant liberties.

If the Union, therefore, present a hope of meliorating the condition, and extinguishing the discontents of a great majority of the Inhabitants of Ireland, without exposing the rest to danger, but on the contrary, adding the most substantial securities to all their legitimate rights, I must profess myself on that account, a warm friend to the measure; and I am free to confess that if those were not to be the consequences, I should expect very little advantage from it.—I am desirous, therefore, of declaring for myself, that I shall think the Union much more perfect, much better adapted to all its beneficial ends, (and the benefits to be expected from it, in such a case, I think incalculable,) if the just claims of the Catholic Irish are provided for by an explicit article of the Treaty itself.—After having thus declared my own mind, and distinctly pronounced my own judgment on this great leading point, I think it right to add, that if any political peculiarities of the present time, should render it impracticable to engross these wholesome provisions in the written Treaty itself, I would rather restrain my wishes for the immediate accomplishment of this desirable end, than expose this great transaction to needless and unprofitable hazard, by unseasonable pertinacity or impatience.—And I should still look with confidence to a period when the object I have mentioned will result as a natural consequence from the Treaty, and when this desirable change will flow, with many other blessings, from the impartiality of the imperial and united legislature.—If I were worthy then of offering to the loyal Catholics of Ireland the advice of an individual, who has no other claim to their attention, than that of uniting a spirit of liberal toleration, and a strong favour towards common right

As opposed to monopoly, of combining, I say, these sentiments with something of a practical disposition which would not reject attainable good when a more perfect accomplishment of right is out of reach, I would implore their prudent acquiescence in a measure which must ultimately consolidate their interest with those of their Country, which will bring in its season, relief to the Catholics and security to the Protestants of Ireland; which will improve the wealth, the prosperity, the dignity, the manners, and the public and private happiness of their Country; and which conferring these blessings with one hand, will avert with the other, the certain ruin, desolation, and slavery, which are at this moment impending over their native land.

I wish to guard against one misinterpretation.—When I prefer the united Parliament to that of Ireland, as at present constituted, I should be much misunderstood, if I were thought to profess a distrust of the wisdom and justice of the Irish Parliament in general, or to impute to it the slightest degree of incompetence to the general objects of its legislative duties.—I profess, on the contrary, the highest respect, both for the Irish Parliament as a body, and for many of its members, with whom I have, indeed, little, or I might nearly say, no personal acquaintance, but whose characters and talents, as public men, I have contemplated, as others do, with the respect they justly inspire.—What I have hazarded on this subject, the delicacy of which I am not insensible to, amounts only to this; that in one great branch and member of Irish Affairs, the present Irish Parliament must be considered as a party, and in those concerns, a major part of the people

people must now receive the law from an adverse and rival authority.—Whereas, in the united Parliament, the Irish members will furnish all the local information, and will possess all the weight and influence, which the general affairs and interests of that Country require ; while those local or partial feelings which might warp the judgment of the best intentioned Irishmen, on some subjects, might be moderated, and tempered, by the mediating impartiality of the imperial Parliament.

I would now consider one or two general objections, which I have observed to be most prominent in the opposition to this measure, and I shall begin with that which appears to have been the most operative and successful throughout Ireland, and to have had the greatest share in the rejection of this important and salutary proposal:—I mean the notion, that a Legislative Union, however beneficial in its effect, to the interests of Ireland, is, however, in some way, derogatory to the honor and national independence of that Country.—The whole of this topic will be found to be an appeal from reason to feeling, and, indeed, from a just and genuine feeling to a blind and inconsiderate one. It is intended, like most of the objections on this Question, to preclude the discussion of its merits;—and what is peculiar to this particular objection, it is not only intended to elude the merits of the principal Question, but it seems to disclaim the discussion even of any proper and specific merits of its own.—It is used, in truth, to disqualify those to whom it is presented for all deliberation whatever, by exciting the passions, and interposing the flame and dazzle of enthusiasm, between the eye and the object it is to examine.—Those who employ

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this topic, have undoubtedly a considerable advantage ; for, in the first place, many more are susceptible of strong and lively feeling, than capable, or willing to form an enlightened and deliberate judgment on any subject whatever.—In the next place, the feeling applied to is in itself by no means unnatural, and so far from being culpable, or a subject of reproach, must, on the contrary, be classed with those affections which are the most beneficial to the world, and the most honorable to those who possess them.—It is, in a word, a branch or mode of patriotism, that virtue which embraces the whole range of our public duties, and which is an object of too much respect and veneration, when genuine and well directed, not to challenge some indulgence even in its errors and delusions. I cannot, however, help suspecting, that those who avoid discussion, are not very firm or confident on the merits ; and that passion is seldom exclusively applied to, when reason is on the same side.—Enthusiasm is, indeed, in general, to be accounted but an unsafe and unfaithful guide.—The guide is himself blind, and I know not how to search for truth with better hope of success, than by the light of such reason as Providence may have bestowed upon us.—I should propose, therefore, to follow that course, and to consider dispassionately, even this passion.—I would fairly and deliberately inquire, whether a sincere regard for the national dignity of Ireland, does, indeed, oppose any solid objection to a Legislative Union with Great Britain.

I shall bestow but little time, in analyzing the nature and foundation of those local affections towards particular spots, which seem to circumscribe the general benevolence

benevolence of mankind within the rivers or seas, or mountains, which encompass that which we call our Country.—Perhaps that expansive love of our fellow Creatures, which has obtained the general name of philanthropy, may have been compressed into narrower bounds, in order to augment its energy in the proper scene of its exertion; perhaps this large and diffusive motive may have been drawn home as it were, and retrenched within limits more commensurate with the size and sphere of human action.—But no matter how or why, the love of our Country certainly exists; it is the noblest affection of the human breast; and I have no doubt is of divine origin.—I am to acknowledge that Ireland, both by its dimensions, its local position, and every other circumstance attending it, offers a fit object for that passion, the ardor of which may well be improved into enthusiasm and zeal, by the many natural charms which, I understand, abound in that Country, and by that to which I can, indeed, speak myself, I mean the many generous qualities which distinguish its inhabitants, and seem to endear that Nation to those who compose it.—I am willing also to admit, that besides that solicitude for the happiness and well-being of the people who inhabit our Country; which is the proper and distinctive feature by which true patriotism is to be recognised, this local affection may also attach a sort of interest, and a certain importance and value, to the separate political existence, or individuality, of that Country.—That identical space has contained the habitual objects of our regard, and an association may have been established between our local and moral attachment, in such a manner as to render it, perhaps, no easy abstraction, to love the people of Ireland, distinctly

tinctly from that which may be called the love of Ireland. Nothing of all this need be controverted; nor is it desirable, that it should be otherwise.—I would only demand a similar assent to some particularities, which I think observable in this passion, and which appear to me, to bear in some degree, on the principal Question.—This local patriotism seems to be limited not only by space, as we have seen, but also with some reference to time.—The space to which the affection of patriotism attaches, is that which we have been accustomed to consider as our Country, at a given time, that is to say, in our own time, or during our own generation.—If it had been larger or smaller at our birth, our love would have expanded or contracted itself accordingly.—We have seen a remarkable instance of this expansive property in local patriotism, or in this love of meres and bounds, as related by Mr. Hume, in his history of the Union of the Heptarchy.—The same truth has been evinced in Wales, and I may speak with better authority still of Scotland, where, I will venture to pronounce, that there does not, at this hour, live a man of any degree or condition, from Berwick to the Orkneys, whose British patriotism would not be more offended, and certainly, much more reasonably, by a proposal for separating these Kingdoms, than any of the Anti-unionists would have been, at the beginning of the Century, by the proposal for uniting them.

I have dwelt somewhat longer on this topic than I otherwise should, principally for the purpose of shewing what the nature and value of that object is, for which Ireland has been persuaded to renounce and reject with anger, the greatest and most evident advantages that were ever offered to a nation. It is, in the first place, then, a sentiment, or feeling, which it is difficult to define, and not perhaps easy even to conceive distinctly. In the next place, this sentiment, such as it is, is so limited in duration, and so obsequious

quious to events, that it is not enough to say that it expires. It actually changes sides — and the very sacrifices we would make to it at one period, will, at a subsequent point of time, and from thence ever after, prove as much in contradiction with, and as offensive to, this very feeling, as it might be welcome and grateful to it before. What then is this mighty object to which such sacrifices are required? It is an airy unsubstantial sentiment; it is a transient, evanescent, metaphysical point, to which we are called upon to sacrifice not only the solid and substantial, but the permanent and perpetual interests of two great nations.

I confess, I cannot persuade myself to rank a sentiment so subtle, and subject to so many refined and delicate modifications, with that sound and genuine affection, or I can class it only as a subordinate mode of that plain and manly passion, which has deserved, by excellence, the style and dignity of patriotism. True patriotism will, I think, be found to rest on the solid basis of some rational and useful principle, which will keep it uniform and uninfluenced by time or circumstance, and which may serve as a criterion to distinguish its own genuine and steady course, from the capricious and irregular motions of some of its many counterfeits. The love of our country may be rational or fantastical as that of any other object; and, I must consider patriotism as partaking sufficiently of the nature of general affection, to acknowledge it for genuine, only when it is evinced by solicitude for the welfare of its object. I fix on this as the distinctive character of sincere affection, whether for our country or for any other object of regard. Public love is founded in utility, and by that mark alone may challenge its descent from Heaven. The rest is all spurious, and to be viewed rather with caution than respect. On this clear principle, then, shall we not say, that a true patriot proposes to himself before all things,
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the prosperity and happiness of those who inhabit his country? He may set a value, if he pleases, on the distinct existence, and individuality of that country; but if his love be well regulated, and all its modes and affections be in due subordination, he will prefer the solid and real happiness of his country to its metaphysical identity. It is to this chaste and disciplined patriotism, that I would appeal, on the present question, against the noisy and clamorous pretence, which would usurp its seat, and bear away the decision by acclamation and tumult, before a sober and enlightened judgment, founded on the solid basis of public utility, can silence this importunate and delusive feeling. To sum up my argument on this point, in plain, but I think, satisfactory terms; if a separate political existence is contrary, nay fatal to the real interests of the people of Ireland; and if a perfect incorporation and union with the British Empire, must be productive of security, aggrandizement and happiness to Ireland, such an Union should on this single but decisive ground, of great and permanent utility, be the first and fondest wish of every Irish heart.

But let us yield even this principle for a moment. Let us subscribe to that strange incomprehensible duty which I have heard proclaimed with a sort of triumph, even in this House, and by which it is required that in a question such as this, the Legislature should banish from their thoughts and contemplation every concern for the interests of the nations which they represent, and that the decision of this mighty question should be founded on any thing but its influence on the national advantage or security. Let us admit the insignificance of Irish prosperity and happiness, and the exclusive title of what is called distinctness and dignity, to our solicitude; I still say, that even these objects are not provided for, by rejecting the present measure. For the choice does not lie between the present condition of Ireland and Union. We are not ignorant

norant that the alternative is according to every moral probability, union or separation; that is to say, union or ruin; union with Great Britain, or slavery to France.— If this measure be not adopted, we know that the distinctness of Ireland must expire; that her political extinction must be accomplished; that she must undergo a change a thousand fold more degrading, as well as destructive, and more fatal to her independence and dignity, by means which no mistaken patriotism can prefer, I mean by subjection to a foreign conqueror, or at best by a debased and slavish dependence on the general tyrant and taskmaster of Europe. Instead of preserving her present independence, or acquiring new accession of importance and dignity, by her association with the British Empire, Ireland is in danger of dropping into that common sepulchre of nations, which has already buried the very names and memories of so many states and kingdoms, now no more. Will the identity or the dignity of Ireland be preserved, when after being first the dupe and the servile tool of France, she becomes her real and effectual slave, under some ridiculous or antiquated nick-name, invented or revived, for the very purpose of obliterating her own?

Let us consider this question in one view more, and setting aside both the real interests of Ireland, and the chances of separation with its attendant calamities, let us only compare the present condition of Ireland in mere dignity, with its future condition, in that single respect, after the Union; for we shall find the opposers of the Union mistaken in the means of consulting even barren dignity, when they prefer the present situation of Ireland to its incorporation with the British Empire.

In what does the dignity of a nation truly consist? Is it merely in its *separate*, or in its *independent* existence? If Ireland, from the very nature of things, is, and always
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must, while it is a separate Kingdom, remain, in some respects and in some degree, dependent, subordinate, inferior ; and the day after its Union with Great Britain, becomes altogether independent, sovereign and equal, how is its dignity better assured by the former condition than by the latter ? We must enquire then what the present situation of Ireland truly is, in point of independence.

Although I would wish to be perfectly frank and explicit, in pointing out those circumstances of necessary and unavoidable subordination which really exist, I would by no means insist on others, which I have heard enlarged upon, I think, with a false pride on our part, and perhaps with reasonable offence to the national feeling of Irishmen, and which, at the same time, do not appear to me genuine tokens of subordination in any respect. Of this description, I consider the necessity under which Ireland labours of claiming, in times of danger, whether from foreign or domestic enemies, the protection of the British navy, and military, at well as pecuniary aid from this country. I conceive Ireland to have a perfect right to this friendly and brotherly co-operation, on two grounds, which seem to me to preclude altogether, either a mortifying humiliation on one hand, or an offensive pride on the other. First, the preservation of Ireland is an English interest, and is a concern sufficiently precious to call for these exertions, even on a distinct and separate view of our own advantage. In the next place, Ireland is entitled to this support, from an Empire to which she is associated, and to the general service and security of which she is herself contributing, cheerfully, and at all times, in every branch of public service. Her seamen, her soldiers, and her revenue, all augment the general stock of British resources. And if peculiar and temporary emergencies have, at this, or any other particular period, increased the local demands of Ireland on the exertions of the Empire,

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we must recollect, that the scene of danger, may at other times be shifted; and we have no reason to doubt, but, on the contrary, have recent grounds, very honourable to Ireland, for believing, that she will be ready to furnish extraordinary exertion, and aid, to repel extraordinary danger on this side of the water, if such occasions should arise.

I must also dissent from another topic which I have heard used, as indicating a national dependence of Ireland on Great Britain. I mean the advantages which she derives from the extensive commerce without, and the prosperous manufactures within, which are supposed to flow, and which, I believe, really do flow, in a great part, from a free participation in the imperial greatness of Great Britain, and from encouragements which she might withhold if so advised. Here again, I think, Ireland may accept, I will not say, without gratitude, but without humiliation, as Great Britain ought to bestow without pride. When the question has been stated between entire separation and Union, these considerations are very pertinently submitted to the prudence of Ireland; for the advantages alluded to, would no doubt, be withdrawn with perfect justice, and indeed, by indispensable policy, if all connexion between us were dissolved. But when the question is placed on the footing of the present argument, that is to say, on a view of our present imperial relation, I then feel, that considering the importance of that relation to Great Britain, as well as to Ireland, the communication of these imperial advantages seems to belong to the very nature of the case, and to flow naturally from the sentiment of fraternity and reciprocal kindness which should accompany such a connexion. These favours seem to be prompted certainly by a liberal, but at the same time, by a wise policy; they are the gifts of an elder to a younger brother; not the wages paid by a superior to a dependant. They ought to excite gratitude, and to improve as well as to secure af-

fection between us; but they need not either exalt the pride of one, or humble that of the other; and to say the truth, I cannot help feeling that the pride of Ireland may be very well reconciled to an obligation, for which she has the consciousness of returning in the reciprocal blessings of imperial connexion, an ample and corresponding equivalent. I craze, therefore, such topics as these, from my argument of Irish subordination. They appear to me not more inconclusive to that point, than somewhat removed, perhaps, from that liberality which ought to characterize such discussions, whether between individuals or nations; and if these obligations of Ireland to Great Britain are ever enlarged upon, I confess I should see it with more pleasure in Ireland, than in this country.

Those real indications of subordination, on which I mean however to rely, appear to me such as ought not to mortify Ireland; because they are derived from the very nature and constitution of human affairs, and especially from one cause, which must afford, I conceive, rather gratification than disgust to national feeling, I mean the imperial connexion which makes Ireland a member of the noblest empire of the globe. For what, after all, is this imperial connexion in the necessity of which we are all agreed? If it be any thing more than a name, and if it afford any substantial advantage, does it not consist in securing a conformity, or rather a perfect uniformity and unity, in the counsels of the two countries on affairs of imperial concern? Such are, in some respects, the regulation of commerce; the transactions and intercourse with foreign states; the declaration of war; the conduct and direction of war; the negotiation and conditions of peace. These are the principal, if not all the points of imperial or common concern; and in these it is admitted, and it is manifest that, for common safety and advantage, the two countries must be governed by one mind, and directed by one will, to the same end. Now let me ask in what manner is uniformity to be ensured on points so much subject
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to doubt in themselves, submitted to a judgment, I mean that of the human mind, the variety and uncertainty of which is proverbial, and especially where some degree of temporary and occasional opposition, both of feeling and interest, may be looked for in particular seasons and circumstances—I need not go about to prove by any tedious argument, what is always conceded on this point, nor need I scruple to assert what the best Irish patriots, and warmest partizans of Irish independence have always freely acknowledged, that unity of counsels can be brought about and preserved, only by leaving the lead to one of those nations in those points on which it is necessary that they should agree. Every sensible and enlightened Irish statesman, has, I think, admitted that in imperial concerns, Ireland must, and ought to follow in the wake of Great Britain. Here then is one authentic and signal badge of real subordination. But how is this necessary acquiescence of Ireland to be ensured? For it stands as yet on discretion and prudence, not on positive provision. May not an interval of passion, or the spleen of some contentious moment, or the influence of some popular leader, persuade Ireland, in an evil hour, to assert her right of separate and independent deliberation in the common concerns, and to vindicate that right, by setting up an opinion of her own, different from that adopted in England? Against this misfortune, which would otherwise be pretty sure of happening, the constitution of our connexion with Ireland has provided some securities. In the first place we have the same King; The King of Great Britain is, in virtue of that crown, King also of Ireland. Ireland is content to follow the fortunes of England in that great point; and this I state as another circumstance of dependence. But there are other still more sensible tokens of practical subordination.—The whole executive Government of Ireland is administered by a Viceroy, appointed indeed by the Sovereign of Ireland, but not with the advice of an Irish cabinet. He is appointed, in effect, by a British Minister, he is subject to instructions from a British Secretary of State,

and responsible for every part of his administration municipal as well as imperial, not to the Irish Parliament, not to the Irish Laws, but to the British Parliament and its high tribunals. Even this is not all; for this may be thought inseparable from the nature and frame of our connexion. There remains a point which was not so much the unavoidable consequence of the imperial constitution, but was thought subject to such a moral and political necessity, as to have been deliberately assented to and retained by the most enlightened and ardent patriots of Ireland, even in the jealous review of her constitution, which took place at that period of enthusiasm and triumph which is become the grand æra of Irish freedom and pride, I mean the year 1782. The circumstance I now allude to is this. The legislative functions of the sovereign of Ireland can be performed only under the Great Seal, not of Ireland, but of Great Britain. Notwithstanding the extreme and jealous tenderness of the Irish nation, on all that could remotely, or even in the refinements of political subtlety, affect the independence of their Parliament; although that Parliament is the shrine on which the nation itself is, it seems, now to be laid a victim; that Irish Parliament was left, and remains at this hour, dependent for the validity of every one of its legislative acts, first on the Chancellor of England, and through his responsibility, on that very Parliament of England, an equal participation in the authority of which is thought so degrading to Ireland. God forbid that Ireland should change her mind on these points of voluntary subordination, or that her pride should supersede her wisdom, and a false dignity take place of her substantial interests at least in these particulars. For such are the few slender-threads which yet hold together these ponderous bodies, and whenever they are broken we part for good. There is yet one other circumstance which not only indicates inferiority, but is so wholly irreconcilable with every notion of equality, and appears to me such a singularity in the condition of any country claiming the character of independent sovereignty, that I must add it
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to the list before I quit this topic. Ireland must take her part in all the wars of Great Britain. She must bear her share of their burthens, and incur all their hazards. She may lose a province, or may become herself a province of the enemy. Yet Ireland cannot, by the utmost success of the war, acquire an acre of new territory to the Irish dominion. Every acquisition made by the forces of the Empire, however great her share may have been in the danger or exertion, accrues to the Crown of Great Britain. If an island were taken by regiments raised in Ireland, and composed wholly of Irishmen, and by ships manned altogether by Irish seamen, that island is a British conquest, and not an Irish one. Ireland claims no sovereignty in any one of the foreign possessions or provinces of the British Empire. She pretends to no dominion in India, in Ceylon, at the Cape of Good Hope, at Martinique, Trinidad, or Minorca. The Irish Parliament has never asserted or conceived the right of legislating for any of the conquests of the King of England, that is to say, of the King of Ireland. They are all subject *ipso facto*, to the Legislature of Great Britain. —Ireland has planted no Irish colonies, but has furnished planters to all those of Great Britain. In a word, this whole class of sovereign rights and capacities, however inherent in the very nature of sovereignty, is wholly wanting in that of Ireland. If we were asked to define, or at least to describe an independent sovereignty, should we err much by saying, it is a state which can make war and peace, which can acquire dominion by conquest, and which can plant colonies, and establish foreign settlements? And if we would describe a subordinate and dependent country, could we do it better than by saying, it is a country which must contribute her quota to all the wars of a neighbouring kingdom, must incur all the risks of those wars and partake in all their disasters; while all that is acquired by their success, falls, like the lion's share, to that country with which it claims to be co-ordinate and co-equal. I will insist no further on this ungracious topic. What I have said, was necessary for my argument, and if I have demonstrat-

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ed the real subordination of Ireland, it was certainly not for the disingenuous pleasure of gratifying the vanity of one nation, at the expence of another, but only to observe that subordination must be the constant companion of an imperial connexion with a more powerful and more considerable state, and that pride can fly only to one of two remedies; I mean, total and absolute separation, or a perfect incorporating and equalizing Union,

This argument is often conducted as if the question lay between distinct existence and total extinction. This is a false view of the alternative. If Ireland foregoes her separate individuality, it is not to perish; but still preserving in full life and vigour, her own existence, she becomes identified with a larger whole; and so far from the pretended annihilation with which our adversaries would alarm her, she appears to me to acquire new extension. I would ask, in what manner is an inhabitant of any province or county of Ireland degraded, when he is enabled to say that he is an Irishman, and that he is besides a Citizen of the united empire of Great Britain and Ireland; and when instead of admission, as it were, by courtesy, to an indirect and circuitous advantage from the greatness of another country, to which he himself claims to be in some sort a stranger, he can assert as clear a title and as positive ownership and property in the glory and prosperity of the empire to which he will belong, as any native of Great Britain can do at this moment? I cannot better describe the condition of Ireland after the Union, or better illustrate the improvement of its independence and dignity, than by saying, that her situation will from that moment be precisely the same in all points with that of Great Britain herself. Unless we suppose, therefore, Ireland in her present situation, more independent and less subordinate than Great Britain, we cannot imagine that her independence will be diminished by the Union. And if it be true, as we have shewn, that she is at present, dependent, and subordinate to Great Britain in many respects, it is clear, that a Union which shall

shall have the effect of placing the two countries on a footing of perfect equality, must improve the independence and dignity of the inferior, that is to say, of Ireland. Is Ireland then annihilated by these means? No; Ireland is still Ireland, while a new scope is given to the pride, and a larger field opened to the patriotism of every Irishman. Let me ask, in fine, where we shall discover in the present condition of Ireland, that superior degree of independent dignity, which should outweigh the real and solid benefits of Union; or where we can perceive in the change which that Union will operate on the political situation of Ireland, the degradation and indignity which should forbid her even to deliberate, and raise an insuperable barrier, both to her aggrandizement and happiness?

I do conceive, indeed, how the situation of some individuals may be such as to afford a greater share of personal consideration or advantage in Ireland, while confined within its present limits, than they might obtain on the greater theatre of the united kingdoms. Even here, indeed, the computation may be fallacious; but however that question may stand with regard to individuals, I am sure that the inhabitants of Ireland will gratify a sound love of national dignity, while they procure to their country unspeakable advantages of every other sort, by their accession to the noble empire of which the Union would make them citizens.

I must therefore conclude, that although I must respect the feelings of those who, following this instinct of national pride, which I have allowed to be in some sort natural, have been blinded to the true merits of this question, either as it regards the interests or the dignity of their country; and although I cannot refuse a considerable degree of indulgence, even to the intemperance and violence excited by any form of patriotism, and even by its errors; yet I must persist in saying, that those will ever appear to me to have evinced a more genuine, a more profound and solicitous affection for their country, who have not refused to deliberate

deliberate on such mighty interests, but have resisted a first and false impulse, and chosen for their guide rather the slower and less captivating torch of reason, than the more lively flashes of passion and prejudice. Nor can I refrain from adding, that if there be indeed any individuals, or descriptions of men, who not misled themselves, but far above the influence of those delusions which they have practised upon the multitude, have seen nothing in this great question but personal or local interests, and have sought to mask a narrow preference of individual and partial advantage, under this pretence of national pride and feeling; if such men, I say, with these motives at the bottom of their hearts, and with the profanation of a great public virtue on their lips, have frustrated the wise and paternal counsel given by our common Sovereign for the permanent and perpetual benefit, and not less for the present and immediate preservation of the empire in all its parts, and especially of their own particular country; I own, I cannot part with this subject, without declaring, that I envy neither the pillows and consciences of those men, nor the place they are likely to fill in the history of their country.

That part of the Speech which relates to the competency of Parliament to sanction or execute the measure of Union, I entirely omit, because I conceive that point to be now universally conceded;—should I however be mistaken, and that a doubt of such competency still remain on the mind of any person amongst the description of Readers for whose convenience, the foregoing Abridgment or Selection has been made, I will refer him to the original Speech, from Page 120 to the end, where he will find argument sufficiently conclusive to cure even the most stubborn infidelity on this point.



